1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

# 1

## Historical Notes on Housing

In all villages, much time is spent, in addition to agricultural or fishing tasks, in housebuilding, either for one's self or for friends and neighbors. Housebuilding is the most time consuming of a man's tasks after his primary occupation. Repairs to or reconstruction of the poorer houses are continuous. The man with a good house and a tile roof has little to worry about. But he will often be found helping someone less fortunate.

The traditional houses of Naha and Shuri showed both Chinese and Japanese influences. The traditional house and compound of the rural village has been compared with the ancient Japanese house, and it bears some similarities with houses found among the Ainu.

It would seem from the observations and researches of earlier students that the house was always built above the ground without excavation, and sometimes on stilts. The supporting posts making up the rectangular house were either placed in holes or on stones on the ground. The supporting posts, the ridge poles, the cross beams were branches or trunks of trees trimmed and cut for length. Roofs of thatch had the apex of the roof covered by a saddle or arch shaped thatch made, like the rest of the roof, of grass. Smoke escaped either through an aperture in the ceiling or through a window, as it still does in many of the poorer houses. The houses were filled with smoke. The oldest rural houses apparently had only a dirt floor with scattered mats, though some had a raised floor.

The food storage sheds or small granaries were raised on stilts. Engravings of these have appeared both in Perry's writings and in Bayard Taylor's works. There is some question whether this granary (now disappeared) was indigenous or a borrowing. The purpose of the raised granary was probably to protect against dampness and to prevent infestation by rats and vermin. These granaries were open sided with no boarded up walls, and, in Okinawa, were circular.[1]

Animal pens or stalls were not attached to the house, but were always separate. In the courtyard, earthen rain water vessels were imbedded half way into the ground to catch the rain water. There were stalls for goats and pig pens, and the pig pens were used also as a toilet. This is no longer practiced to my knowledge, although the outhouse with its holes in the ground is found under the same roof as the pig pen. The entrance to the courtyard was opposite the front of the house. The protective stationary gate, the hinpun (in Okinawan), made of reeds or stones, stood at the entrance inside the court, as it does now, to shield the people of

1 For drawings of the granaries, see Satow, E. M. Notes on Loochoo. Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 1 (1882), 1-8. The drawings follow the text. See also Simon, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, as cited, 75-85.

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342 magazines and pasted on the wall, and here he entertains visitors who come for conversation or study.

3

Types of Houses

342 In all the villages studied, the houses may be divided into three general categories: (1) the Japanese style house with the thatch or tile roof, (2) the smaller stone house with the Japanese type floor plan, and (3) various shacks resembling in some details the simple structure of the old Okinawan rural house.

[313] [439] The sturdy Japanese type house is made of excellent hardwoods imported from Japan or brought from the forests of northern Okinawa. This house was often constructed without nails. It was put together [335] by mortise and tenon joints, and also with a piece of wood, square on the edge and about three inches long which functions like a dowel. This is known as a kusabi. In modern houses, both of the simple and more complex types, nails are more commonly used.

[355] The eaves of this house are supported by strong poles, unfinished, usually from the Japanese redwood (sugi in Japanese, Cryptomeria [411] japonica, D. Don) or the ihumaki (Podocarpus macrophyllus D. Don). The poles are placed on flat triangular stones for foundation support. The houses have plank floors. Both the tile and the thatch roof types (to be [352] described later) have the same floor plan with the size of the rooms determined by the number of mats (tatami in Japanese) desired.

The half tile, half thatch roof is not uncommon, an indication either of a roof partially destroyed by the war which has been repaired by thatch, or a thatched roof gradually being replaced by tile. This is a slow process, as tile is costly. Basically, all of these houses have the same general plan, except for differences in roof materials.

[355] The older Japanese type houses with a tile roof and the newer ones being built on that model are provided with a drain pipe for rain water catchment. This pipe, running along the length and the width of the [415] roof channels the water into a large tank on the ground, reducing the labor involved in carrying water from village ponds or central springs. [312] Many of these rain water catchments disappeared when the old houses were destroyed in the war. Drain pipes cannot be attached to the thatch. In general, rain water is not now a plentiful source of supply in the villages, though buckets and tubs are frequently put out during a heavy downpour, and this water is used for drinking and cooking until it begins to spoil. It may supplement the water carried from a central village faucet, the well, or a pond.

The construction of the Japanese type house is complex. Basically, the design of the house is derived from the arrangement of three rooms,

an interwoven diagonal weave of miscanthus whose hollow stalks at maturity are strong but brittle, resembling in appearance a very small piece of bamboo. (2) The house with a simple thatch roof with walls of various sized rocks or small pebbles cemented together with mud taken from the yard, and (3) a thatch roof house whose frame is built with small rough hewn poles, over which a thin cheap pine siding is nailed. The construction of this house will be described in some detail below because, with the exception of the modern pine siding to replace the straw or diagonal weave, it is, according to the Okinawans, the oldest type of native rural house.

The house must have heat during the winter. The kitchen hearth is not used for this purpose. The kitchen fires are allowed to die down and are only started at meal times. It would be too expensive or wasteful of gathered fuel to do otherwise. Room heat is provided by a brazier (hibachi in Japanese). This may be a large square box with an inset lined with metal in which ashes and charcoal are placed. Some winter cooking may be done here. The hibachi may also be a large earthenware pot in which coals of charcoal are placed.

In some old homes, another device suitable both for heating and cooking, can still be seen. This was observed in Matsuda, but not in the southern villages. This is also a sort of hearth (jiru in Japanese). The jiru consists of a hanging bamboo pole one end of which is secured by a rope tied to a lattice in the ceiling. On the other end of the pole, about three feet long, there is an iron hook with another device, like an arm bent at the elbow, allowing the height of the hook above the fire to be adjusted. The handle of the pot is placed on this hook and the pot hangs at any desired distance over a bed of coals and ashes. This hearth is not in the kitchen, but at one corner of the dining room, usually where the two open rooms adjoin. The jiru is rare in the villages at the present time. It is from this device that the former practice of a mother and a new born infant "roasting" themselves takes its name; both the mother and the new born child were exposed, in a closed room, to heat from the jiru or from a brazier, even in the intensest heat of summer.[7]

## 4

## Building a Simple House

The following description is based on observations made of the construction of a simple house in Hinatogawa. The steps are given in some detail because it was said that this house was being constructed in the manner of the traditional rural Okinawan house.

Rough hewn poles were used. The traditional method of putting on

7 This will be discussed in Chapter 13 on family life in the section on the rearing of children.

342 Co-operation often takes the form of a division of labor. In
476 building an elaborate permanent house with cement foundations, siding,
463 plank flooring and a tile roof, greater skills than the handyman techniques of a smaller house are required. In the building of a house, men with special skills, such as a carpenter, a cement mixer, a stonecutter, or a mason participate; others bring lumber and wood from the mountains, as in Matsuda, or lay the grass on the tile roof. In some [464] cases, all the labor may be donated; in others, the carpenter, the cement mixer, the stonecutter may be hired, with helper's work done by volunteers. In simpler construction, the carpentry may be done by anyone who has this secondary skill but is primarily a farmer or a fisherman. People who have those skills are said to have half and half occupations (hannohangyō in Japanese).

## 7

## Housebuilding Ceremonies

342 In building, a distinction is made between a temporary and a permanent house. A temporary house may be built following a typhoon or a fire, or it may be constructed for a poor man and in fact be a permanent house for the family, the good house to come being more an aspiration than an early reality. The marks of a permanent house are construction with beams, instead of poles, good siding, a good roof, now mostly of tile, a design based on mat size, and a cemented kitchen. Housebuilding ceremonies and celebrations apply only to the permanent house.

[184] Ceremonies or observances during stages in the building of a house
342 differ from place to place and among people in the same village. In
782 Matsuda before the house is started, the owner, his friends, and neighbors gather and offer a prayer that the house be a good and a happy one. Before construction, and once each year following completion, rice cakes (mochi in Japanese) and sake are placed in each of the four corners [262] of the house site. Three rice cakes are put on the smallest of three saucers which fit into one another. Two of these saucer sets with the [203] rice cakes, together with a sake bottle and a small cup are placed on a tray. The east, north, west, and south corners are visited in that [415] order. Sake is poured from the flask to a small cup. There is a short prayer. A piece of white paper, attached to a stick of dwarf bamboo (Yambaru take) about one foot long is burned. The sake is poured over the embers. The top rice cake is placed on the corner; the other two [825] remain on the small plate. Prayers are offered for protection against the deadly snake (habu). The rice cake is then picked up. On the next corner, the ceremony is repeated.

When the ridge pole is put up, the carpenter prays that there will be no injuries. Observances at the raising of the roof (muneage in [183] Okinawan) seem to be universal in the villages. Three parcels, one of salt, one of bean paste, and one of charcoal are wrapped in a leaf--any [262] will do--and these are tied with a string and suspended from the inner side of the crossbeam or from the ridge pole. There are no prayers at this time.

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**Rotation #2, Matsuda**

**First year, ninth month: Autumn planting of sugar cane**
**Second year, twelfth month: Harvest of sugar cane. Followed by: Soy bean, sweet potato, or vegetables.**

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Land is seldom allowed to lie fallow intentionally for any length of time. At any one time of the year, a farmer may have idle land for which there may be a variety of reasons. He may have other tasks and be unable to cultivate all his land, or have no need of doing so, or some of his land may be so poor that he will not cultivate it unless necessary. Much depends on the individual farmer and his holdings. The village records indicate that in Hanashiro 97.2% of the rice and 83.1% of the dry crop land is under cultivation. From the preceding discussion of land classification, it is clear that many parcels are of marginal quality, and these areas may be left uncultivated, at least part of the year. During the post-war [426] period there has been some informal lending of land, free of rent, to friends and neighbors, if the farmer is not using it himself.

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Manual labor with hand tools is the dominant method of cultivation. Domestic animals are not uncommon, but their use in farming is minor. The war increased the dependence on manual labor through the loss of domestic animals. Only cattle are now used in rice cultivation for plowing and harrowing and this is infrequent. The man or woman and the hoe are far more common. Crops are carried from the [482] fields by human labor. The basket or the straw container, or the tied rice sheaves on either end of a pole over the shoulder, and not [415] horse carts, push carts, or wheel barrows are the main means of transport from field to courtyard. The barefooted farmer, with his [493] hoe and a pole or a basket does the greatest part of the work. The common tools of agriculture are hand tools and adapted to the intensive cultivation which so often has more properly been called the work of a gardener rather than that of a farmer.

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The basic all purpose tool is the solid bladed hoe. The hoe, since deep cuts are possible with its heavy blade, takes the place of the plow. The hoe also replaces the spade, and even the rake, for it can be used to break up and smooth the soil. A poorer farmer may lack [434] many of the tools in the following list, but he will have two or three of the solid bladed hoes.

The accompanying illustration shows the most common agricultural tools:

1. The hera, a spatula or trowel, used for transplanting tops of the sweet potato. Its wooden hand grip curves toward the end of the tool. The hera is also used as a scraper to remove brown sugar from the sides of the cooking pans during the sugar making season.

2. The kama, a small sickle. Next to the hoe, it is the most

256 until the desired white shade was obtained. After the milling, the rice is quite warm, and both the chaff and the rice have an odor similar to brewer's yeast.

[462] [482] [415] Women carry the rice to the mill. It is heaped up in baskets set on their heads. Rice straw or a braid of rice stalks is placed over the small towel which rests directly on the head. On this the woman sets the basket with its rice. When the milling is over, the women pick up a handful, blow off the chaff, inspect the rice for wholeness and whiteness, and then put it in a large gunny sack. The chaff is placed in a smaller one. Hulls, occasionally taken, are usually left at the mill to accumulate in a pile outside the mill and there, at [824] frequent intervals, are burned. Sometimes the hulls or the ashes are taken for fertilizer.

[521] Bringing rice for milling is a social occasion for the women. They often have a child on their back. While waiting for their rice to be hulled and milled, they exchange greetings and news with their neighbors or with women from adjoining villages.

[727] As a result of the war, quality of machinery for rice milling differs with villages. Most now have access to a mill. The machinery at Matsuda, being more efficient than the older machines at Hanashiro is able to polish the rice satisfactorily after going through the mill three times. These mills are very busy during the harvest seasons.

252 [912] There are also survivals of older methods of hulling and polishing rice. These are no longer used, though many of the old have not lost their skill. Before machine polishing was introduced, the hulls were removed by pounding the rice in a mortar, usually with a long bamboo pole narrowed in the center for a grip. After the hulls were removed, the rice was put through a quern, or a mill known as a shiriushi. This has two working parts: a base about a foot in diameter and perhaps a foot in height. It looks like a smoothed off log. In the center, there is a wooden pin, perhaps 1 1/2 feet long. Over this part, which looks like an upright piece of a log with a rolling pin stuck in its center, the upper part, made of wood and of the same diameter is fitted. A bar across the inside of the top of the upper part has a hole for the pin. On the outside, wooden plugs provide places for attaching ropes. [462] These are pulled back and forth by women sitting opposite one another. The rice is poured in at the top, the quern is moved first clock- and then counterclockwise, the rice coming out in the rough crevice where the two pieces join. The rice is put through the quern as many times as is necessary to effect the polishing. In some querns, the inside of the upper part is grooved to quicken the polishing.

In polishing rice in this way, the mill is placed on a mat and the rice is gathered up periodically and put in baskets. It is then winnowed by tossing in a flat basket. Many of the farmers in the villages still have a shiriushi in their sheds, but it is seldom used.

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Matsuda. Polishing rice with a hand mill. This is a posed picture, but rice was polished this way up to shortly before the war. The grass mat prevents wastage. On the left is some Yambaru bamboo. The women are barefooted. The towel-like headdress is not uncommon.

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of the rest of the syrup. With the stirring finished, the sugar for contemplated home use is spread out in pans to harden. That intended for export is put in specially prepared boxes, furnished by Naha export firms, stenciled and ready for shipment. 249 [439] [415]

In Matsuda, the harvesting of the cane is the same as in Hanashiro. But the old Okinawan and Japanese method of crushing the cane is still used because the destroyed machinery has not been replaced. The cane is crushed outside. Three large steel rollers are placed side by side in a frame, with gear teeth on the top meshing. A sweep about 30 feet long is attached to the center wheel.[6] A horse draws the sweep, revolving the wheels. The cane is fed into the left roller, caught as it comes out, and then fed back into the right roller. The juice is caught below. The residue (kibikasu) is left outside to dry to be used later for firewood. The juices which have been caught are taken in a low lying building with a tile roof, put in a large round pot (sarunabe) or a rectangular pan (kikunabe). An open fire place is used for boiling the juice; the fire place is sunk in the ground and lined with stone, with a small opening at the bottom for putting in firewood. This mill is privately owned, the property of an association (kumiai) of about twenty men who rent it out for individual processing. As in Hanashiro, sugar is the production of the individual small farmer from its first planting until its sale for export or for home use. [427] [423] [429]

## 7

## Other Crops

The most important of the other crops commonly grown in the villages remain to be considered. 241

(1) Soy beans (daisu in Japanese, Glycine max Merrill). In all the villages, soy beans were planted once a year, sowing in the first or second month, and harvesting in the fifth month. The field is prepared by making furrows and putting a mixture of chopped up green grasses and some animal manure, or a commercial fertilizer, in the hole in which the seed is planted. The farmer then waits for rain. After rain, he plants the seeds about three feet apart in rows from one shaku five sun (about 18 inches) for very good land to one shaku one sun (about 13 inches) for usual land. The plant is harvested with the small sickle. The beans are threshed by a flail (gurumanbo in Okinawan). The residues are used either for fertilizer or fuel.

6 This device is also relatively unchanged since Perry's time. The only difference is in the wheels which were formerly of wood, geared together by mortise and tenon joints. Stone crushers were also used formerly. In Hanashiro, I saw one of these stone rollers lying in the yard of a villager. For sugar making operations in the 1850's, see Hawks, Perry's expedition to Japan, II, 20, 30.

226 476 The boat, as in the previous example, is considered a person. The cook is usually a boy about 16 or 17 years old. If we further assume a catch valued at Y10,000, with a deduction of Y1000 for gas and oil, there is a remainder of Y9,000 to be divided. The boat's share, A, is 30%, or Y2700, with Y6300 for further distribution. The following formula is then applied to this remainder:

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | 1.5 shares |
| Engineer | 1.5 shares |
| Fishermen | 7.0 shares, one for each of 7 men |
| Cook | 0.7 shares |
| | 10.7 |

The value of each share is Y588.78 (Y6300 divided by 10.7). If the amounts are rounded off, the final distribution is:

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain | Y883 (1.5 x 588.78) |
| Engineer | 883 (1.5 x 588.78) |
| Fishermen | 4121 (1 x 588.78 x 7) |
| Cook | 412 (0.7 x 588.78) |
| | Y6300 |

The distribution takes place at the conclusion of a voyage. Obligations (giri) between the owner and the others, on these larger boats, are also based on custom. If a crew member is injured on a voyage and prevented from going on the next one, he receives a share for the voyage he was on, and some money, depending on the catch but not a full share, during convalescence. If a fisherman is ill and has been injured outside of his work, he does not receive this consideration.

## 5

## Sale and Distribution of Fish

443 462 435 The sale and the distribution of fish is the work of women. Men occasionally do this, but their function is to catch the fish, maintain the boats and gear, and make the lures. The bulk of the fish is sold at Naha because the highest prices generally are paid there. This makes it difficult for adjacent villages to obtain fish, even in season. When the fish is especially plentiful and low in price at Naha, the women go to the agricultural villages of the interior. Fish are carried in baskets. The pre-war custom of carrying the fish basket on the head and walking from village to village, or to the railroad station at Kochinda, thence by rail to Naha, has given way to truck, bus, or the three wheeled cycle. Often in the evening, these cycles, which can seat six comfortably, are filled with eight or ten laughing and voluble women, and their fish, the vehicle chugging slowly and painfully up and then coasting down the grades.

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000 One can infrequently observe women walking from Hinatogawa to

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7



## Daily Life of the Fishing Village

Fishing families may have informal gatherings toward the end of the day. On a late summer afternoon, the family may sit in the open doorway of the house, for hedges, fences, the barriers, and trees are rare. The wife may be nursing her naked child. Her husband, a fisherman, has changed into his indigo blue and white striped kimono, a tall, broad, deeply tanned man. Next to him sits his mother, over 70 years old, her hands tattooed, as are those of all the old women. She is wearing a kimono of the same color, but of a dot pattern. They sit on unrolled mats. On the veranda, three or four men, unwashed and still in their work clothes, discuss the events of the day. A lacquar tray with tea cups is on the floor near them and the tea (as it so often is) may be cold. There is brown sugar to eat along with the tea. The grandmother may be economically smoking a half or a third of a cigarette in the typical Japanese pipe. As it grows later, the wife gets up, pours some water in the stone mortar, and smashes the sweet potatoes with the long wooden pole. The men continue talking for a while, then take their leave. The wife, her work at the mortar finished, goes into the dirt kitchen to start the evening meal.

The wife of the fisherman has worries that do not bother the farmer's wife. There is always the danger that her husband, or son, will not return, a real possibility, of which the frequency of widowhood in Hinatogawa is proof. Every season, there is at least one instance of a fisherman who has either been lost, or whose delay in returning has provoked intense worry. If crews are still out when an unexpected storm arises, there is considerable tension in the village. Since the war, rescues at sea are more likely than before. The village headman quickly reports overdue boats. The American forces have created much good will in seeking fishermen lost at sea.

Women, on the other hand, have opportunities for leisure when the catch is light, or weather is unfavorable. At these times, they can busy themselves with other tasks, in the field, gathering stones, getting miscanthus, but they do not have the unremitting activity of the woman in the agricultural village. There is more visiting during the day than one observes in an agricultural village.

The fisherman, with or without land, tries to keep pigs and perhaps a few goats. In Hinatogawa, the pens are often made of sandstone quarried here. Not only the floors and the sides, but the stalls are made of this material. One reason for this is the openness of the village and the danger that pigs will be killed in a storm. A typhoon may carry away the house, its owners having gone to the stronger house of a friend or relative, but pigs are an investment and an asset to be guarded.

824 (12) The pandanus (adan or takonoki, Japanese scientific name, Pandanus oderatissimus L) is also scattered. Formerly the pandanus was widely used in Okinawa for slippers and a Panama type hat was made for export. This home industry has disappeared from Matsuda, as it has from the south.

(13) The i (Juncus effusus, Linn. var. decipiens Buch). This rush is used in the better quality home made mats (mushiro). The i is generally the warp of these mats, with some other grass the weft. It is occasionally cultivated when rice paddies are not in use, as it requires much water. There are two varieties of i, the round, and the three cornered (sankaku). The three cornered variety is used in cheaper quality mats. The round variety with cotton string as the warp, is used in weaving the best mats.

(14) The Yambaru bamboo (Yambaru take). This I believe is the same as, or at least very similar to the Japanese sasa, or dwarf bamboo (Arundinaria communis Mak.). Yambaru take means "northern district bamboo" and throughout Okinawa the term is used to describe this valuable plant. In appearance, it resembles the susuki grass, but its stalks are much woodier, have a greater diameter, and the plant is much taller. In an uncleared forest, the Yambaru bamboo grows six to nine feet high and has a foothold wherever there is the slightest room in the forest. Patches often are intermingled with the shii, pine, and the numerous shrubs. This is the roof thatch material of the north. Its other uses include the weaving of stationary barriers (hinpun) in front of the house compound. The stalks are closely woven diagonally while still green. The plant has innumerable uses, depending on individual improvisation. While green, charcoal containers may be made out of it; it may be woven into rough baskets (zaru) for carrying sweet potatoes, or to bind up the small bundles of firewood which are sent south. In general, the smaller diameters of Yambaru bamboo are used for roofs; the larger for bamboo fences (takegaki) and the face level hinpun. Bundles of Yambaru bamboo are sent to Naha and Shuri for weaving.

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3

The Uses of the Forest

313 Clearcutting seems to be the curse of traditional Oriental forestry. Starting at the convenient base of a hill or mountain, every tree has been cut up the hill until a steep or inaccessible part is reached. This destructive exploitation has been an established Japanese forestry practice despite the obvious inducements to soil erosion.[5]

The results of clearcutting observable near Matsuda now are a product of the overwhelming war and post-war demand for lumber and

5 A report on Japanese natural resources, as cited, 357.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

40% of the proceeds. The trees thus sold are all cut down. After clearcutting, the area is left to natural reseeding. About twenty years hence, the clearing will again be sufficiently forested to permit repetition of the same procedure. This follows an established Japanese pre-war practice. This was known as the five year period share (gonenkanbun). The forest is divided into subdivisions, each 110 chō in area. (A chō is 2.45 acres). These 110 chō plots are in turn subdivided into five parcels of twenty-two chō each. Each year one of these five subdivisions may be cleared.

Throughout the forest, divided up into these plots, there may be a five year cycle of cutting, but not all the plots are available every year. If this were so, the forest could be cut over in five years. The system is planned so that there will always be parcels being cleared, those in various stages of regrowth, and mature stands. During and after the war, this practice broke down in favor of uncontrolled cutting.

If a family has little cash, a villager may pay his taxes in part by cutting wood. The village office pays Y4 for a bundle of firewood (late 1951), Y2 going to the villager as a cash payment, and Y2 being applied to his taxes for the year.

The farmer makes frequent excursions to the mountains to obtain firewood or poles to make improvements in the compound, such as repairing a tool or food shed. Men do this work, especially when the distances are far, but the participation of women is by no means exceptional. Along the roads of northern Okinawa, one can frequently see old women walking down from the mountains carrying bundles of firewood on heavy poles. Much of the wood is hand carried from the mountains; if the farmer has a horse and cart or a truck, the wood is carried to a convenient road for loading and transport.

Charcoal is manufactured in the forest area. In Okinawa charcoal has many uses, mainly for heating and cooking, and for charcoal sticks (senko). Lumps of charcoal are placed in braziers and the sticks are used as touchwood in place of matches and in ceremonial and religious observances. Charcoal containers (tangu) are often constructed on the spot. These are round or box-shaped and made out of the dwarf bamboo.

Charcoal kilns are privately owned. They are of the simplest sort. The kiln may be covered with a rude housing, built up by poles and a thatch roof. A mound of large boulders and dirt is built with an opening on the dirt floor running the length of the firing area. Poles which have been stripped and cut in various lengths, from five to nine feet, are shoved in the opening and moved forward as they burn. The smoke comes out the back.

Forest maintenance and improvement is, in part, a result of community endeavor. With some exceptions, each person in the village from 16 to 60 participates one day a year in forest improvement (sōrin).[8] The participants are boys past school age, unmarried girls, and all men up to the age of 60. These people work without personal renumera-

[8] The usual meaning of sōrin is afforestation or reforestation. In Matsuda it is used in the sense of care and improvement of the forest.

## Alcoholic Beverages

443 Japanese and American canned beer
[273] Japanese type sake (a light rice wine resembling sauterne)
Okinawan sake (awamori)

## Miscellaneous

Charcoal sticks
[276] Brass and nickel plated Japanese pipes
Small dishes
[415] Sake bottles
Oil burners to keep mosquitos away
[416] Flashlights, bulbs, and batteries
Matches
Japanese and American tobaccos
Fishing lamps and the ika lamp (fishing villages only)

[437] Transactions are usually on a cash basis, although some customers pay at the end of the week. In one such store, the gross sales averaged ¥600 a day with a net profit of about 10%. (The yen is pegged at 120 to the US dollar). During the day and the early evening, the village
[366] stores are meeting places, especially if, like Hinatogawa, several together make up a small business center.

443 Supplies are delivered to village stores by truck or sometimes by
494 bus. Often the owner goes to the larger towns to buy. Young boys are
[850] an important cog in the distribution system. They deliver candies, cookies, and other small articles which are carried in five gallon lard tins on racks over the rear mudguard of their bicycles. They ride up to the store, count out their candies or cookies, receive payment, and cycle on to the next store over a route which includes several villages. These boys work out of larger towns like Itoman and Nago. Baking goods,
[262] bread (pan) really a sweet dough with a jelly-like filling, cookies and candies are distributed in this manner. Sometimes housewives make cookies and cakes to sell to village stores.

443 There is not much house to house selling or soliciting. Occasionally women come to the villages with a selection of ready made clothing or cloth. In Hinatogawa, an itinerant drug vendor periodically goes through the village ringing his bell, selling various Japanese patent medicines mainly for colds, headaches, constipation, and stomach aches.

444 Import stores (hyakuhō), also operated privately, are a different
262 kind of enterprise than the village shop. They have been set up under
511 the American occupation. Larger wholesalers supply the village retailers. These stores deal in a restricted number of commodities, such as rice, flour, soy bean sauce, wheat, and cooking oils. Sales are made to villagers on a rationing system based on the number in the family, its
[342] age distribution, pregnancy, and whether the head is engaged in heavy work. The intent of the import stores is to make food available, at reasonable cost, to those who cannot grow their own, or whose own produce

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

000 vegetables in season.

262 On special occasions, cookies, cakes, and more fresh fish and meat are served. In Okinawa any food out of the ordinary is called a feast or a treat (gochisu). Fresh fish, fish cakes, beef, pork make up a feast, for these are seldom served in the routine meal. Fish, pork, and beef are universally liked, but fish is hard to get, beef is expensive, and pork is a source of cash income. Many families eat pork only at New Year.

By almost any standard, including their own, the daily Okinawan diet is monotonous and unappetizing. Nevertheless the present diet is an improvement over the pre-war one. Most villagers said that before the war, the diet consisted of the sweet potato and bean paste soup. Bean paste soup usually has a few shreds of meat or fish in it. In times of scarcity, or if the family is very poor, only the paste is used, and when this is dissolved in hot water, it makes a kind of clear bouillon which is jokingly referred to as "mirror soup" (kagami miso) because one can see his face in it. In Okinawa, it is also called "nothing in it soup" (nnshiru). Since the war, the rice imports from Java, Siam, Egypt, and other foods sold through import stores have provided more variety. [939]

272 Goats are a cheap source of meat, but many do not like goat's meat. The milk is not used for human consumption.

Tea is served at all hours. Many Okinawans, however, have acquired a taste for coffee. Tea is steeped in a large pot and placed on a tray with the cups. Once made, tea stays in the pot until it is drunk. Frequently it is lukewarm or cold. Callers are served tea and small chunks of brown sugar, picked up with chopsticks. Sugar is never used to sweeten tea. There is considerable eating between meals, especially if visitors drop in. Women prepare a bowl of noodles, of cooked vegetables, fry an egg, or slice up some bean curd. Villagers eat enormous quantities of food. [915] [574] [269] [262]

574 The people are very hospitable, but hospitality does not take the form of inviting friends to dinner except on special occasions, like a birthday celebration or a wedding. One family does not entertain another at dinner, but an individual member of a family who has worked at a friend's house may stay for an evening meal. Or a child may eat with the family of his playmates. Entertaining does not include a man and his wife. The wife normally stays at home.[1] [562]

1 In Hinatogawa, I was told that the beginning of the preparation of the meal was a sign for the visitor to return home. This was not due to the broad hint of the host but to the reserve (enryo) of the visitor. "Nnun ni wariu" (Okinawan) "to be pressed by food" is said by those returning home at these times. One goes home at meal times.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

By the 7th day, the reminders of New Year have been cleared away. The old offerings are taken from the god shelf and replaced by new food. The rice straw rope, if any, has been removed. 527

Of all the holidays New Year is the most eagerly anticipated and the most varied in its activities. It combines ideas of renewal and new beginnings with worship of the dead and of the founders of the village, as well as being a means of making closer ties with more distant relatives of the extended family. It is a time of work and some pleasure for the women, a time of relaxation and drinking for the men.

2

Jūrokunichi

The second public holiday, Jūrokunichi (literally 16th day) is on the 16th day of the 1st lunar month (February 21, 1951). This is a holiday of devotion and prayer at the family tomb. Worshippers go singly or in a group. The tomb is cleaned and food is left for the dead. 769 [796]

In Hanashiro, food is taken in two lacquer boxes (jūbako) the first of which contains rice cakes, the second, fritters, meat, bean curd, and other food depending on the resources of the family. For the first observance after death, two boxes are taken on this holiday. On succeeding anniversaries only the box containing the fritters, meat, bean curd and other foods is taken.1 The purpose of this offering is to comfort the dead. The food, usually with tea and sake, is left before the tomb for about two hours and taken home, where it is eaten. (Offerings at tombs or at home are only temporary; later they are removed and eaten as ordinary food). The lacquer boxes may also be taken on New Year, at the spring equinox, and at O-Bon. [262] [415]

In Hinatogawa, descendants of the former nobility or gentry (shisoku) take four boxes, two of rice cakes, two of the miscellaneous foods, while descendants of commoners take two boxes, one of the rice cakes, and one of the assortment. Every year the same offering is made. It is not reduced to one box after the first. In Matsuda, any kind of a flower is placed by the tomb. A lacquer box with food is prepared for all who died during the preceding year, but it remains on the god shelf in the house and is not taken to the tomb. The contents of the two boxes are as previously described. On succeeding anniversaries after the first, plates instead of lacquer boxes are used. [565] [262]

1 The idea behind this is not clear. Possibly in the first year the dead person requires more food and comfort than in succeeding ones. As they do with so many other practices, most Okinawans explain it by saying that it is shikan (the custom).

Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1956) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira



There are no uniform sleeping arrangements. The larger the family, the more corners of the front rooms and rear room are occupied. Since the number of comforters is limited in most families, two or three members of the family share one. Father and mother do not always sleep together, and, even if they do, an infant may sleep between them. When there are several children, another child may sleep next to the father, so that in one row there may be mother, a baby, father, and an older child. One or two children usually sleep with the grandmother in another corner. In several families an older sister may sleep with younger brothers; in others, two elder brothers, or an older sister and an older brother, may sleep next to each other. Children do not usually sleep at other people's houses, but when they reach junior high school age, a girl may stay with a girl friend or a group of boys may sleep together at one house. 513

A simple desk and chair are kept in each house where children go to school. These are put in one corner of the front room, except in large houses with a third room in front, which is reserved for schoolchildren of the house, who also sleep there. Around the study corner, books are kept on a crate or shelf. Only the biggest houses have a niche in their "first" room. Paintings and scrolls, used to decorate alcoves before the war, have been lost, and few people have acquired replacements. Many families decorate rooms by pasting pictures from magazines and newspapers on the walls. Some have reproductions of the Japanese Crown Prince Akihito, others scenic pictures from Japan. 352 353

Only a few recent buildings have inner sliding doors with paper screens. The paper is often left off during the hot season and put on before New Year. If children or cats are around, the splendor does not last long, and even an adult's hand frequently punctures the screen in trying to open the door. Holes are left unrepaired for the remainder of the year. 342 356

The eating corner between kitchen and rear room is the place where most families gather in the evening, especially during the winter. An informal caller may join them there. If it is cold, a brazier is put in the center, filled with pieces of charcoal on top of old ashes to provide heat for those sitting around it. These braziers vary in type: the poorest families use the bottom of an oil drum filled with ashes; others use pottery jars or small wooden boxes lined with metal. 342 264 354

Crockery used in most houses is of a simple type. If breakage occurs, as it often does, a cup or bowl can be replaced for a few yen at the grocery store. Well-to-do families may have an extra set of teacups, which are used for guests. Several families also own lacquer ware, but it is not in daily use. Like cups and bowls, chopsticks are simple and inexpensive. They last a long time and are seldom lost. Children do 415 [412]

415 857 not use household equipment in their games. Instead they find broken dishes, old cans, and other discarded items in the trash heap. Children do

354 [716] [654] The kitchen has no equipment other than the open fireplace with three hearth stones and a shelf above it on which a salt column, symbolizing kitchen deities, is kept. During the last few years, the Ryukyan government Home Extension Service has been trying to introduce brick stoves into farmhouses. Several families now have this kind of stove although it is expensive to build.

356 As far as can be superficially discerned, the home is kept clean. A visitor usually finds the floor of the house free of dirt. Footgear is taken off before entering, and children are reminded to wash their bare feet before going into the house. Less care is given to the area around the kitchen.

312 415 Outside the kitchen stand one or two jars to store water. A dipper is kept nearby, and children playing in the vicinity or adults often walk to one of these jars for water, which they drink out of a dipper. There may also be an array of pots, pans, crates, baskets, and other equipment piled up around the kitchen. Knives and hatchets are openly left around among the equipment behind the kitchen.

351 [514] [364] The courtyard is an important place for domestic activities. Here women and girls wash dishes, mix pig food in large kettles, make bean paste in a hand stone grinder, and prepare grain for storage. There are vegetable patches in one corner of the yard, chicken coops, pigsties, goat pens, and an outhouse in another. Most garbage is fed to the pigs; the rest is thrown over the sea wall to roll down onto the beach.

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## Chapter 2

# Daily Routine

805 512 There are few clocks in central Taira. Except for the township office, post office, and village store, only two or three families own a timepiece. Twice a day, at noon and 10 o'clock in the evening, a clerk strikes

312
854
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*Women washing at water tank.*

*Women transplanting rice.*

243
291

*Women transplanting.*

*Carrying wood.*

[482]

[p 456-B]

857
226
854
291

*Children catching small fish.*

*Girls washing their laundry.*

857
291
302

[296]
[415]
←

[482]
→
[312]

*Carrying water while their mother is recovering from giving birth.*

[243]
→

*Boy harvesting.*

[p. 456-C]

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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effectively in the case of a boy who did not respond to red pepper or black paper. The mother described how she tried to fend off the boy one day by simply refusing. As he fussed and cried there was a loud clanging of the pots in the kitchen. The boy stopped crying and looked at the mother who pretended to be very frightened. "Look now! There! It's a big rat coming for your mother's breast, let's hide it, quick, quick!" And with that she buttoned her blouse hurriedly and took the boy in her arms. She laughed as she described how she reminded him thereafter about the rat and how he ran to her and held onto her breasts protectively.

For the child, this whole interim period is a stormy one filled with tantrums, whining, and obstinancy. At no time, however, does the child resort to thumbsucking or other breast substitutes. For older siblings who are his caretakers, this period is a very unpleasant one. Many things displease the child. If his caretaker squats, he screams to have him stand; if he stands, he whines to have him walk. Frequently the sibling caring for him reflects the changing attitude toward the child, and, jiggles him up and down impatiently with a frown and curt comment, "What is it!"

As far as actual nourishment is concerned, weaning should not be so traumatic. Long before weaning commences, when the child is about one, he is given a spoon with which he can learn to feed himself. If families can afford it, they purchase new spoons and special small-sized rice bowls as well as chopsticks for these novices. When the budget is so limited that purchases of new implements are impossible, adult-sized ones are used, and often as not the tablespoon used for cooking and serving proves useful.

At mealtime the entire household sits in the back room, which is next to the kitchen. The head of the family sits nearest to the raised hearth, and the rest of the members form a circle to the left and right of him at a low round or rectangular table. The baby sits on his mother's or grandmother's lap. Usually the mess resulting from this early training period in self-feeding is ignored. The adult holding the novice in his lap occasionally picks up the dropped rice and thrusts small pieces of fish or vegetable into his mouth. Only when he bangs the table excessively with his spoon do his elders mildly chide him. At first the adult holding him will absently reach for the offending arm and slip some food into his mouth. Later they will begin reprimanding him by scowling and glaring at him saying, "Me-me!" (child talk for "eye," meaning "I look at you disapprovingly.") But all this is done in a very gentle way, and often when the novice bursts into tears from fright of the disapproving response, he will be hugged, laughed at, and